

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ECLA MEETING IN PORT OF SPAIN

1. THE SECOND DAY OF THE MEETING OF THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA (ECLA) ON MAY 7 IN PORT OF SPAIN WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY A MAJOR ADDRESS BEFORE THE DELEGATES BY ENRIQUE V. IGLESIAS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF ECLA.

2. MR. IGLESIAS STRESSED BOTH THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND THE DIFFICULTIES TO EXPECT OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS. HE EMPHASIZED THE PROGRESS RECENTLY MADE BY THE REGION, SUPPORTED BY IMPRESSIVE GAINS IN GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVED THAT TERMS OF TRADE FOR LATIN AMERICA ARE WORSENING AND THE TREND MAY CONTINUE THROUGH 1980. AS TWO SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE ECLA SECRETARIAT, HE URGED THAT NO BARRIERS BE ERECTED TO INTRA-ZONAL TRADE, AND HE PROPOSED CREATION OF A SAFETY NET WITH A BASIC FUND OF FOUR BILLION DOLLARS.

3. OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MAY 7 SESSION INCLUDED SPEECHES
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BY THE PERUVIAN REPRESENTATIVE, JOSE LOAYZA AMERQUITA, WHO

BELIEVED THAT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN LATIN AMERICA IS WORSE THAN TWO YEARS AGO; BY THE VENEZUELAN REPRESENTATIVE, REINALDO FIGUEREDO, WHO OBSERVED THAT THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF INFLATION, RECESSION AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE REGION ARE THE WASTEFUL HABITS OF THE CONSUMPTION SOCIETIES. FIGUEREDO ALSO REMARKED THAT VENEZUELA STILL BELIEVES IN ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH TRADE, NOT AID, BUT FAVORS A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC AID PROJECTS AND PLANS, INCLUDING SOME SPONSORED BY HIS GOVERNMENT. HIS DELEGATION SUPPORTS "TRULY LATIN AMERICAN" ENTERPRISES IN COMMERCE, PRODUCTION AND TRANSPORT.

4. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA, HECTOR RODRIGUEZ LLOMPART, PAINTED A GLOOMY PICTURE OF LATIN AMERICA'S ECONOMIC SITUATION, EXCEPT THAT OF CUBA. ALTHOUGH HE SAID THAT "CUBA WILL PARTICIPATE IN THESE DELIBERATIONS WITH MODESTY," HE ACCUSED BRAZIL OF FALSIFYING ITS ECONOMIC STATISTICS TO PORTRAY ECONOMIC PROGRESS AND CALLED THE US TRADE ACT "A BRUTAL LEGALIZATION OF REPULSIVE INSTRUMENTS USED BY THE MOST CRUDE IMPERIALIST TRADE POLICY."

5. IN RESPONSE TO CUBAN STATEMENTS ABOUT THE TRADE ACT, US REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ECLA MEETING, AMBASSADOR BARBARA M. WHITE, WAS QUOTED IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE TRINIDAD GUARDIAN AS SAYING THAT HER DELEGATION DID NOT WANT TO "ESCALATE RHETORIC." SHE SAID THAT SHE WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE DISCUSSIONS SO FAR AND THE DESIRE OF THE DELEGATIONS TO CONSIDER THE "PROBLEMS WE FACE," AN APPROACH WHICH THE US DELEGATION INTENDED TO FOLLOW. MULLIGAN

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